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ABSTRACT

This document is the working draft of a guide to develop a strategic plan for emphasizing diversity in the Cooperative Extension System (CES). It begins with a foreword outlining the history of the movement toward increasing emphasis on diversity in the CES and an introduction stating the CES's commitment to emphasizing diversity. The next seven sections are as follows: a list of strategic goals; the rationale for emphasizing diversity; a comparison of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) guidelines and the CES's emphasis on diversity; a description of steps being taken by the CES to become a multicultural organization; a mission statement; a list of CES values; and a discussion of the steps being taken to translate the CES's current vision of diversity into reality. The next section details the CES action plan for achieving the following goals: commitment to pluralism, environment for diversity and pluralism, work force diversity, audience and program diversity, full and influential participation, and equitable partnerships. A brief statement of CES future goals and a timeline are provided. A 14-item bibliography and list of task force members conclude the document. (MN)

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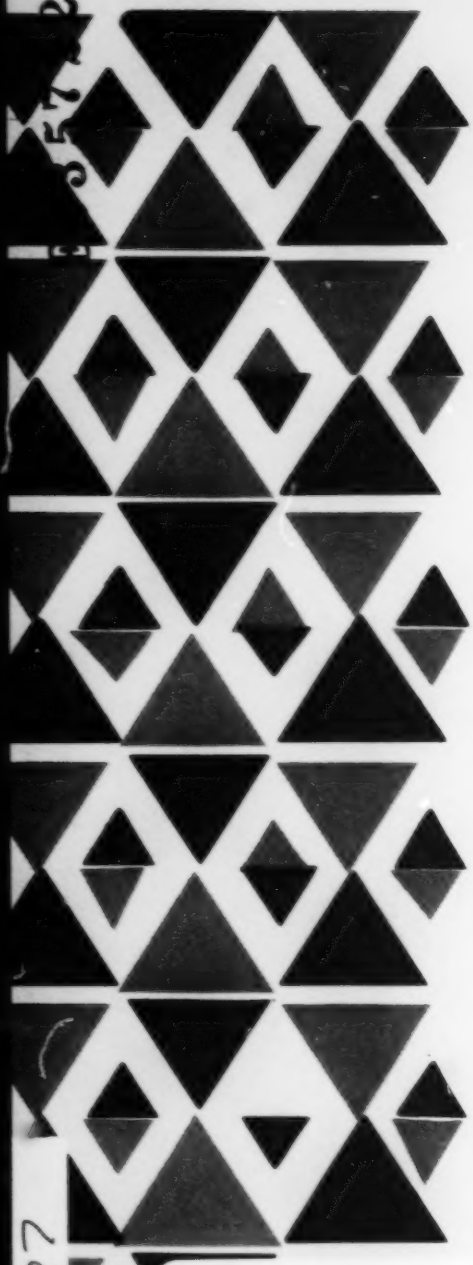

**Working Document**

# Pathway to Diversity

## Strategic Plan for the Cooperative Extension System's Emphasis on Diversity

Strategic Planning Task Force on Diversity

October 1991

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## FOREWORD

The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (ES-USDA), established the Cooperative Extension Systems's **Emphasis on Diversity** in October 1990. *Pathway to Diversity* is the strategic plan developed to guide the Extension System in implementing the **Emphasis on Diversity**.

*Pathway* provides a vision of the Cooperative Extension System (CES) as "a diverse and multicultural organization that values, is committed to, and embodies pluralism as a long-term investment in the future," and "a role model for achieving a pluralistic society." The mission, vision, and strategic goals for achieving diversity and pluralism are outlined in the plan. They describe urgent and most important work for the Extension System that is an integral part of Extension's mission of addressing the critical needs and issues of the people of the Nation, states, and territories.

*Pathway* was initially prepared in draft form and circulated throughout the Extension System for comment and revision. The Council on Diversity in Extension, a group of 11 people knowledgeable about and involved with valuing diversity programs in private and public organizations, provided comments on the draft plan in July 1991. A national Extension conference was held in September 1991 to review the plan. More than 160 people, representing Extension teams from 45 states and 1 territory, participated. These comments were used to prepare this version of the plan.

*Pathway* is intentionally printed in a "working" format that is easily copied. We invite wide distribution. Specific actions and strategies are included for the guidance of ECOP, ES-USDA, ECOP Committees, and "CES administrators at all levels." We urge ECOP, ES-USDA, and ECOP Committees to begin incorporating these efforts into their activities on behalf of the Cooperative Extension System. We encourage Extension staff and administrators at all levels to use *Pathway* as a model and guide in developing strategic and action plans for achieving and sustaining diversity and pluralism in states, territories, and ES-USDA. It will need to be adapted to the specific opportunities of each Extension organization.

Strategic plans always run the danger of being put into file drawers and forgotten. We seek to keep *Pathway to Diversity* in the forefront of the Cooperative Extension System agenda--to learn from our progress and struggles in carrying out the plan. We have asked Michael Brazzel, ES-USDA, and Curtis E. Gear, Jr., University of Wisconsin-Extension, along with the members of the Subcommittee on Extension Diversity, which they cochair, to keep us advised of the progress and problems with *Pathway*. Please contact them about your experiences.

Richard E. Fowler

Richard Fowler
Chair, Extension Committee on
Organization and Policy

Myron D. Johnsrud

Myron D. Johnsrud
Administrator
Extension Service, USDA

# PATHWAY TO DIVERSITY

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## INTRODUCTION

**THE COMMITMENT: The Cooperative Extension System is committed to an emphasis on diversity in mission and vision; work force; programs; audiences; and relationships with other people, groups, and organizations.**

*Diversity--human differences in all forms--is no longer an option for organizations in the United States and its territories. Work force and audience diversity and pluralism are key to organizational survival and success into the 21st century.*

Today, there are new rules. These new rules include respect and sensitivities toward all people, no matter how different or diverse. Change--worldwide change--surrounds the daily lives of all Americans, continually impacting how people live, learn, work, and communicate.

The challenge to public educational institutions, including the Cooperative Extension System, is to integrate diversity into the core mission and vision; to weave pluralism into the very fabric of the organization.

Historically, responsiveness to change--to the needs of people where they live and work--is a strength of the Cooperative Extension System. As the population and work force continue to change, diversity and pluralism become the bottom line for the System.

Increased productivity, relevance, and effectiveness; enhanced creativity and innovation--all are additional benefits of this organizational investment and commitment to diversity.

The CES challenge is to acknowledge and confirm the value of diversity and pluralism by including all staff as full and influential members of the organization and by providing educational opportunities for current and potential audiences using existing and diverse staff and innovative programs.

**STRATEGIC GOALS**

This strategic plan is designed to carry out the System's commitment to diversity and pluralism through the following six goals:

*GOAL: COMMITMENT TO PLURALISM*

The Cooperative Extension System will incorporate pluralism as an integral part of the System's mission and vision and affirm its support and commitment to achieving and sustaining pluralism.

*GOAL: ENVIRONMENT FOR DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM*

CES will establish a physical, psychological, and emotional environment that creates, fosters, and sustains diversity and pluralism and eliminates discrimination at all levels.

*GOAL: WORK FORCE DIVERSITY*

CES will increase and sustain the diversity of the System's work force, including leadership, to better reflect the diversity of the population of the Nation, states, and territories.

*GOAL: AUDIENCE AND PROGRAM DIVERSITY*

CES will expand the diversity of current and potential audiences and programs to reflect the population of the Nation, states, and territories in selecting and developing programs.

*GOAL: FULL AND INFLUENTIAL PARTICIPATION*

CES will include members of diverse groups as full and influential participants in all aspects of CES, especially in decisionmaking and in establishing policies that shape the organization and its programs.

*GOAL: EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS*

CES will provide equitable partnerships, funding, and support for all Extension organizations, including 1890 and Tuskegee Extension organizations, 1862 state and territory Extension organizations, District of Columbia Extension Service, and ES-USDA.

**THE EMPHASIS ON DIVERSITY**
**IN**
**THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM**

Extension's **Emphasis on Diversity** addresses the many dimensions of diversity that are already a feature of the mosaic society present in our Nation, states, and territories. Its mission is to achieve and sustain pluralism as an integral part of every aspect of Extension: mission and vision; work force; programs; audiences; and relationships with other people, groups, and organizations. Many organizations have a diverse work force and diverse program audiences--but are not necessarily multicultural organizations. The **Emphasis on Diversity** is designed to move Extension to being a multicultural organization that values diversity and pluralism.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Diversity** is defined as differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice, and other human differences.

**Pluralism** is defined as an organizational culture that incorporates mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork, and productivity among people who are diverse in the dimensions of human differences listed above as diversity.

**Multicultural Organizations** are defined as organizations that:

* Value human differences as a competitive advantage;

* Have a pluralistic culture that reflects the interests, contributions, and values of members of diverse groups;

* Have full and influential participation by all members of the organization in decisions and policies that shape the organization; and

* Eliminate discrimination throughout the organization.

**Discrimination** is defined as the systematic, intended or unintended, denial of recognition, power, privilege, and opportunity to certain people based on the groups to which they belong.

## EEO/AA AND THE EMPHASIS ON DIVERSITY

The **Emphasis on Diversity** is **not** a renamed and repackaged version of Extension's Civil Rights programs. The **Emphasis on Diversity** goes beyond Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) to develop a culture and environment in which diversity is valued and pluralism is achieved. Strong and effective EEO/AA programs form an important part of the foundation for the **Emphasis on Diversity**.

The distinguishing features between EEO/AA programs and the **Emphasis on Diversity** are:

* EEO/AA includes specified legal requirements for "nondiscrimination," a complaints process to address discriminatory employment and program practices, and a process to encourage work force and program representation of underrepresented groups.

* The **Emphasis on Diversity** includes activities beyond EEO/AA that are needed to achieve and sustain diversity and pluralism.

The **Emphasis on Diversity** is voluntary on the part of the Cooperative Extension System and individual Extension organizations. It is a strategic response to changes in the United States population and work force designed to maintain an effective and productive work force in Extension, and programs relevant to the people of the Nation, states, and territories. The **Emphasis on Diversity** assumes pluralism. It creates a culture and environment in which human differences are valued and people are encouraged to bring all of who they are into the work place. This contrasts with the practice of assimilation in which diverse people are expected to limit and adapt behavior and style to the cultural practices, norms, and values of the majority culture.

### DIFFERENCES

| EEO/AA | EMPHASIS ON DIVERSITY |
|---|---|
| * Government initiated | * Extension initiated |
| * Legally driven | * Productivity/effectiveness/ relevance driven |
| * Problem/prevention focused | * Opportunity focused |
| * Focus on program and employment neutrality | * Focus on work and program environment and the use of work force skills |
| * Assumes assimilation | * Assumes pluralism |
| * Reactive/proactive | * Proactive |

## TOWARD A MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATION

The Cooperative Extension System prides itself on valuing people and the contributions of all segments of the organization, including volunteers. The System continues to build a variety of educational programs and other resources that can be delivered to diverse audiences.

As in any organization undergoing dramatic change, barriers to achieving diversity throughout CES still exist. These barriers are often expressed through subtle "isms" and inequities. Lack of communication impedes understanding of diversity and implementation of multicultural programs.

Opportunities exist for CES to build on its strengths to increase diversity within staff, programs, audiences, and stakeholders. These opportunities include:

* Recruiting and hiring a more diverse work force as current staff leave or retire.

* Developing, training, and evaluating methods to assist current staff in their efforts to work with diverse programs and audiences.

* Developing reward and recognition systems that acknowledge staff at all levels who provide effective educational programs for diverse audiences.

The Cooperative Extension organization recognizes the need for strong leadership to address diversity issues through issue-based programming initiatives.

This commitment to diversity and pluralism across the organization gives the System an opportunity to develop and maintain a competitive advantage into the 21st century.

## MISSION FOR EMPHASIS ON DIVERSITY

The mission of the Cooperative Extension System's **Emphasis on Diversity** and the strategic plan is to achieve and sustain pluralism as an integral part of every aspect of Extension: mission and vision; work force; programs; audiences; and relationships with other people, groups, and organizations.

## VALUES

The Cooperative Extension System recognizes that organizational values are important and critical to achieving and sustaining diversity and pluralism. The values underlying this plan are:

* Commitment to diversity in all staff, volunteers, and audiences; including full participation in programs, policy formulation, and decisionmaking.

* Ability to lead and model diversity throughout the organization and to lead society toward pluralism.

* Commitment to individual and organizational efforts to build respect, dignity, fairness, caring, equality, and self-esteem.

* Recognition of the rights of all individuals to mutual respect; acceptance of others without biases based on differences of any kind.

* Commitment to equitable treatment and elimination of discrimination in all its forms at all organizational levels and throughout all programs.

* Recognition and promotion of the diversity of ideas and human potential.

## TODAY'S VISION--TOMORROW'S REALITY

The Cooperative Extension System is a diverse and multicultural organization that values, is committed to, and embodies pluralism as a long-term investment in the future. This investment positions CES as a productive, effective, and relevant organization--a role model for achieving a pluralistic society.

**Employer of Choice**--Wherever one looks in Extension there is diversity. CES employees work in a supportive and caring environment in which leadership, power, and influence are shared. They are treated with fairness and dignity. Each person's contributions and perspectives are respected and appreciated. CES is an employer of choice, and people are hired and promoted because of what they can do and how well they do it.

**Programs of Choice**--CES interacts with all people about their interests and needs; the System develops and delivers programs that address these needs. People from diverse groups choose to participate in Extension programs. These programs are effective and they work. CES is responsive to all audiences because the System:

* Supports a diverse work force;
* Trains staff to program with and for diverse audiences;
* Joins with other groups and organizations in developing, providing, and evaluating programs; and
* Rewards staff members who promote and support diversity and pluralism.

**Equitable Partnerships**--CES maintains equitable partnerships and funding among all Extension organizations. Extension organizations located in territories and in historically black land-grant educational institutions are valued and supported the same as organizations in historically white land-grant universities. Their programs are valued for the differences they contribute in expertise and cultural perspective to the total Extension System. Faculty and administrators from Extension territories and from historically black land-grant institutions are leaders and members of the committees and task forces that shape key CES decisions, policies, and programs.

**Social Justice**--Discrimination is eliminated across the Cooperative Extension System in programs, in relationships with audiences and other people, groups, and organizations. Recognition, power, privilege, and opportunity are extended to all people because they are valued for all aspects of their age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice, and other dimensions of human diversity.

Human differences abound in Extension. They make Extension work exciting and fulfilling. They are our competitive edge. They are the right way for the System to be.

## CES STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DIVERSITY

To achieve diversity and pluralism throughout the CES organization, the following strategic plan will be implemented:

### GOAL: COMMITMENT TO PLURALISM

The Cooperative Extension System will incorporate pluralism as an integral part of the System's mission and vision and affirm its support and commitment to achieving and sustaining pluralism.

**Action**: The Incorporate pluralism into CES mission and vision statement and implement the Diversity Strategic Plan.

**Strategy**: Strategic Planning Council will recommend a revised CES mission and vision statement by February 1992 or shortly thereafter. The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture will endorse and convene a national meeting to implement the revised mission, vision, and Diversity Strategic Plan.

**Action**: Communicate and demonstrate commitment and support and allocate resources for achieving and sustaining pluralism.

**Strategy**: CES administrators at all levels will, on a continuing basis, communicate and demonstrate their commitment and support for this plan in policy statements, communiques (internal and external), presentations/meetings, role modeling, direct resources for implementing and expressing organizational accomplishments.

**Action**: Establish a process for monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of the Diversity Strategic Plan and adjust for needed changes.

**Strategy**: ECOP Personnel and Organizational Development Committee (PODC) will design the monitoring process and be responsible for its implementation.

**Action**: Maintain the mechanism for an external review by the Council on Diversity in Extension.

**Strategy**: ECOP and ES-USDA will establish the Council on Diversity in Extension as a permanent System committee.

**GOAL: ENVIRONMENT FOR DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM**

CES will establish a physical, psychological, and emotional environment that creates, fosters, and sustains diversity and pluralism and eliminates discrimination at all levels.

**Action**: Identify and implement ways to create a physical, psychological, and emotional environment that fosters diversity and pluralism in the workplace and in programs.

**Strategy**: CES administrators at all levels will implement focus groups, councils, and other mechanisms to identify ways to:

* Create a safe, productive, physically accessible, and healthy environment for everyone in the workplace and in programs.

* Reduce and eliminate prejudice and discrimination for everyone in the workplace and in programs.

* Implement the approaches identified above and establish processes to monitor their effectiveness and adjust for needed changes.

**Action**: Provide training and staff development for CES administrators, managers, and staff at all levels to achieve and sustain diversity and pluralism in the workplace and in programs.

**Strategy**: ECOP-PODC will develop an integrated training and staff development plan for implementation by CES administrators at all levels. The plan will include: education for awareness, skill-building, and prejudice/discrimination reduction and elimination; valuing diversity and pluralism; inservice training, networks, and information sharing for enhancing pluralism.

**Action**: Implement personnel appraisal and reward systems for CES administrators, managers, and staff at all levels that enhance diversity and pluralism as an integral part of these appraisal and reward processes.

**Strategy**: CES administrators at all levels will establish focus groups, councils, and other mechanisms to identify ways to enhance diversity and pluralism as an integral part of the personnel appraisal and reward processes. They will implement the identified approaches, establish mechanisms to monitor their effectiveness, and adjust for needed changes.

**GOAL: WORK FORCE DIVERSITY**

CES will increase and sustain the diversity of the System's work force, including leadership, to better reflect the diversity of the population of the Nation, states, and territories.

**Action**: Develop policies and procedures to achieve and sustain the diversity of Extension's work force.

**Strategy**: ECOP and ES-USDA will assess present policies including EEO/AA and create new or revised policies necessary to achieve diversity.

**Action**: Develop national, state, and territory action plans to implement policies to achieve and sustain work force diversity.

**Strategy**: Appoint appropriate task forces at various levels to develop, assess, and analyze current work force data; plan strategies for recruitment, retention, and training of staff from diverse groups; develop incentives, recognition, and rewards to attain and sustain diversity goals; design a system for evaluation and accountability.

**Action**: Increase the diversity in CES administration at the highest levels.

**Strategy**: CES will engage in a major effort to diversify its leadership. The ES-USDA Administrator will encourage university presidents and search committees to increase efforts to improve diversity in the selection of CES Directors/Administrators. PODC will develop and recommend additional processes to diversify CES leadership.

**Action**: Allocate resources to achieve and sustain diversity throughout the CES work force.

**Strategy**: CES administrators at all levels will begin immediately to identify, develop, and target the resources necessary to increase and sustain work force diversity.

**GOAL: AUDIENCE AND PROGRAM DIVERSITY**

CES will expand the diversity of current and potential audiences and programs to reflect the population of the Nation, states, and territories in selecting and developing programs.

**Action**: Assess and strengthen EEO/AA programs to determine current and potential audience composition, the extent of barriers to their participation in programs; and develop strategies to improve audience diversity.

**Strategy**: An ECOP-appointed task force will assess and use findings to develop appropriate strategies and programs to eliminate or reduce barriers, collect/summarize findings from across states and territories, and communicate nationally.

**Action**: Involve people from diverse audiences in the selection, design, development, and evaluation of Extension programs and initiatives.

**Strategies**: National and state initiative teams, CES administrators at all levels, and program development groups will systematically involve diverse audiences in the selection, design, development, and evaluation of programs and initiatives.

**Action**: Develop appropriate technology, training, and implementation plans that will enhance diversity.

**Strategy**: ECOP-PODC will encourage development of:

* Programs, materials, and methods that support efforts to enhance diversity;
* Staff training curricula for emphasizing diversity and working with diverse audiences;
* National/regional resource centers to identify, catalog, and disseminate resources, research, and program efforts in diversity;
* Systems of rewards, incentives, and recognition of diversity work; and
* Evaluation of this effort.

**Action**: Reallocate existing funding and cultivate new funding sources to encourage and enhance diversity in programs and audiences.

**Strategy**: CES organizations will take action to improve funding that enhances diversity. This can be achieved by incorporating diversity issues into funded programs, developing coalitions with other organizations and agencies to fund joint diversity efforts, and developing sources of funds to support resource centers and staff training.

**Action**: Articulate CES's **Emphasis on Diversity** to stakeholders and clientele including those who have traditionally provided support or received services.

**Strategy**: CES administrators at all levels will develop and implement plans for educating stakeholders and clientele about System efforts to achieve and sustain diversity and pluralism.

**GOAL: FULL AND INFLUENTIAL PARTICIPATION**

CES will include members of diverse groups as full and influential participants in all aspects of CES, especially in decisionmaking and establishing policies that shape the organization and its programs.

**Action**: Appoint and fully involve members of diverse groups as leaders and members of decision and policymaking bodies, program development and advisory committees, and coalitions and networks of ES-USDA, ECOP, Extension regions, and the overall CES.

**Strategy**: ES-USDA, ECOP, and CES administrators at all levels responsible for implementing this action.

**Strategy**: ECOP-PODC will establish a standing committee to monitor the full and influential participation of diverse groups and the progress of CES in achieving changes in image and credibility as they relate to diversity and pluralism.

**GOAL: EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS**

CES will provide equitable partnerships, funding, and support for all Extension organizations, including 1890 and Tuskegee Extension organizations, 1862 state and territory Extension organizations, District of Columbia Extension Service, and ES-USDA.

**Action:** Assess allocation of resources and the administrative structure for partnership and cooperation.

**Strategy:** ECOP and ES-USDA will appoint a task force to review and assess:

* Current legislation governing the distribution of funds to 1890 and 1862 Extension organizations and identify changes required to achieve pluralism.
* Partnership roles of 1890 and 1862 Extension organizations and ES-USDA.
* Structure for partnership and cooperation.
* Levels and process of funding and budget allocation.
* Federal, state, territory, and local staffing, programs, and audiences.

Based on the assessment, this task force will recommend policy and procedures for equitable partnerships, funding, and support.

**Action:** Develop cooperative programming between and among 1890 and 1862 institutions in states, territories, and the District of Columbia.

**Strategy:** Under ES-USDA and ECOP leadership, appropriate CES administrators will develop an integrated, comprehensive, issue-based, joint program plan of work and cooperatively appoint statewide program-leadership staff from both 1890 and 1862 institutions.

**Strategy:** ECOP's Personnel and Organizational Development Committee and Program Leadership Committee will facilitate, support, and enhance cooperative programming:

* Among 1862 and 1890 Extension organizations located in the same state;
* Among other Extension organizations--between states, between territories, between states and territories, and (across state and territory lines) between 1890 organizations, Tuskegee, the District of Columbia, and other Extension organizations not in the same state.

## THE FUTURE

The **Emphasis on Diversity** is a bold leadership initiative designed to move a dynamic organization to new values and levels of consciousness and productivity. The **Emphasis on Diversity** fosters new visions of what can be; it asserts that diversity and pluralism are intrinsic to Extension's mission of addressing the critical issues and needs of the people of the United States and territories.

This challenge needs to be shared collectively by staff, stakeholders, and the total Cooperative Extension System leadership. Clearly, this bold initiative represents change. This change, for many, will be uncomfortable. There will be need for encouragement and opportunity for open communication.

The Cooperative Extension System is committed to reaching the important goals expressed in this strategic plan through organizational change. Three themes are highlighted:

* Achieving and sustaining pluralism throughout the System,
* Enriching and enhancing the work environment, and
* Being more responsive to the needs of audiences through the development of more culturally sensitive programs.

In achieving these goals, the Cooperative Extension System will become a model for public and private agencies in valuing and promoting diversity and pluralism.

**TIMELINE/DATES**

1992

* February--SPC recommend a revised CES mission and vision statement to incorporate pluralism. Shortly thereafter, ECOP and ES-USDA endorse.

* April--CES administrators at all levels communicate commitment to diversity.

* October--ECOP and ES-USDA assess present work force policies and procedures.

  October--Begin efforts to increase diversity in CES administration at the highest level.

**1993**

* April--ECOP appoint a task force to assess audience diversity Systemwide.

* October--All Extension organizations--national, state, and territories--develop work force diversity implementation plans.

* October--ECOP and ES-USDA appoint task force to assess partnership, funding, and support for all Extension organizations.

* October--ECOP-PODC develop an integrated training and staff development plan.

**1994**

* April--ECOP-PODC establish a committee to monitor full and influential participation of diverse groups in program development and implementation.

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## TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Gae Broadwater, Cochair
CES, Mississippi State University

Stephanie Cocci
University of Minnesota Extension

A.J. Dye
Extension Service, USDA

Celedonio Gapasin,
CES, Alabama A&M University

Rosalyn Gilchrist
CES, Ohio State University

John Hancock
CES, University of Kentucky

Nathaniel Keys
CES, Prairie View A&M University

Geraldine Peeples
CES, Michigan State University

Allyn Smith
CES, University of California

William E. Robertson
Cochair, CES, University of Missouri-Columbia

Estela Diaz
Extension Service, USDA

Thelma Feaster
CES, North Carolina A&T State University

Mitchell Geasler
Extension Service, USDA

Judith Glaser
CES, University of Massachusetts

Frances Johnson
CES, University of Illinois

Dale R. Mutch
CES, Michigan State University

Enrique Perez
CES, Texas A&M University

Lawrence Yee,
CES, University of California

Michael Brazzel, Liaison for Subcommittee on Extension Diversity, PODC, ECOP
Extension Service, USDA

Patricia Calvert, Consultant to the Task Force for Communications
Extension Service, USDA

Kenda Heathcote
Secretary for the Task Force
CES, Michigan State University

Edith P. Thomas, Consultant to the Task Force for Strategic Planning Process
Extension Service, USDA